11: Johnson H-4,5 (no date) 1930
(1525-ca. 1880)
NN23 Sea Islanders NN23
South Carolina
St. Helena Island

towns where they found employment as servants and day laborers. Miss Towne speaks of their flocking back to St. Helena once a year "from Savannah, Charleston, Bull River, and all about" to attend the "exhibition" of Penn School.[18] Robert Smalls, famous during the war as the Beaufort Negro who turned over a Confederate steamer to Union officers and later conspicuous as a Congressman from South Carolina, attempted in 1879 to lead a group of Negroes from St. Helena's Parish to Arizona.

The discovery and utilization of the phosphate beds along the coast of South Carolina came in 1870 as a godsend to black laborers as well as to the whites who organized the companies. Many a St. Helena black man left his farm for his wife and children to cultivate while he went to the "Rock," as the phosphate mines in the coastal counties were called, to get "cash money." When digging was commenced just off Eddings' Point on St. Helena, the news "set all the boys wild."[19] In 1871 the *Beaufort Republican*, after announcing the enlargement of one of the phosphate mines, added, "Our colored friends can look to the future with pleasure and know that they will not have to roam over the country next summer to look for work but will find it on Bull River at the Oak Point Mine."[20] When the phosphate beds were exhausted, oyster factories began to be erected at Beaufort, on Ladies Island, and on St. Helena so that the Negroes still had a means of earning a little ready money either as hands in the factories or as laborers on the oyster boats. There were, also, still five or six white families on St. Helena

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 286.
[19] *Ibid.*, p. 273.
[20] *Beaufort Republican*, Nov. 23, 1871.